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LETTER DATED 2 JULY 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF IRAQ TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

On instructions from my Government, I have the honour to transmit to you herewith a letter dated 30 June 1996 addressed to you by Mr. Mohammed Said Al-Sahaf, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Iraq.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter and its annex circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Nizar HAMDOON
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

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Annex

Letter dated 30 June 1996 from the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq addressed to the Secretary-General

Many countries, as well as the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), are making exceptional efforts to establish new international norms with a view to reinforcing respect for international humanitarian law, given that experience has shown the wide gap that exists between its legal provisions and its application in reality. Perhaps the best indication of this is the plight of the Iraqi prisoners of war being held in Iran, some of whom have been in captivity for more than 15 years merely because of Iran's unwarranted insistence on continuing to treat them in a negative manner that is incompatible with the most elementary norms of international law. We have tried all possible ways and means of inducing Iran to discharge its obligations under the 1949 Geneva Conventions, and particularly the Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War, but to no avail. Iran also refuses to cooperate with ICRC in the performance of the functions entrusted to it under the terms of the Conventions.

On the basis of paragraph 3 of Security Council resolution 598 (1987), the Government of the Republic of Iraq requests the United Nations, in cooperation with ICRC, to bring pressure to bear on Iran with a view to devising a solution that will bring an end to the suffering of the Iraqi prisoners by securing their release and their return to Iraq. It is fully prepared to cooperate with you and with ICRC in any measures that may promote the repatriation of all those concerned, particularly since Iraq, for its own part, has discharged all of its international obligations under the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War.

(Signed) Mohammed Said AL-SAHAF
Minister for Foreign Affairs
of the Republic of Iraq